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WELLS -NEXT -THE -SEA    URBAN    DISTRICT    COUNCIL

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ANNUAL    REPORT

of the

MEDICAL    OFFICER    OF    HEALTH

for the Year 1955

to which is appended the

REPORT    OF    THE    SANITARY    INSPECTOR

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Local Health Office,  
Church Street,  
Wells-next-the-Sea,  
Norfolk.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF  
HEALTH FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST  
DECEMBER, 1955.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your information and consideration the Annual Report for the Year 1955, compiled according to the directions of the Minister of Health.

Public Health or the health of the community can be described in different ways depending on which aspect of health is being emphasised. It is often expressed in terms of infant mortality or of death rates or by the amount of disease and disability present, such as the number of cases of cancer, poliomyelitis etc. In small communities mortality rates can show wide variations and this is well exemplified by the infant mortality rate (for the year under review) of 75 per 1,000 births, compared with nil in 1954 and a national rate of 24.9. The death rate on the other hand shows a reduction from previous years, but such rates do not present a complete picture of all that is meant by public health, and they give little indication of the amount of social disorder and of conditions hostile to health such as overcrowding and bad housing. Diseases which are or may be influenced by environmental conditions such as infective hepatitis and poliomyelitis were absent but that is no indication that environmental conditions are good. It is more likely that the community has a certain degree of immunity or perhaps is protected by its remoteness from larger centres of population.

I thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for the courtesy and consideration shown to the public health staff during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

J. COUTTS MILNE.

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members  
of the Wells-next-the-Sea  
Urban District Council.

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

J. COUTTS MILNE, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. & H.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor

F. RODWELL, M.R.S.I., M.S.A.I.

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The Committee concerned with public health is the  
Public Health Committee.

## PART I.

(General Report of the Medical Officer of Health.)

### 1. STAFF

There was no change in the staff during the year under review.

The population of the town as estimated by the Registrar General for mid 1955 is 2,590, ten less than in 1954. The natural increase of births over deaths is 14.

### 2. BIRTH AND DEATH RATE

During the year there were 40 live births giving a birth rate of 15.4 per 1,000 of the population. The comparability factor given by the Registrar General which when applied to the local rate gives a figure which can be compared with the rate in other areas is 1.11 for births. Thus the adjusted rate is 17.1 which compares with the rate of 15.0 for England and Wales as a whole.

The 26 deaths give a crude death rate of 10.04 per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, compared with a rate of 12.7 in 1954. The comparability factor is 0.77 and this gives an adjusted rate of 7.7 which compares with the rate of 11.7 for England and Wales.

### 3. INFANT MORTALITY RATE

There were 3 deaths in children under 1 year of age and all three were less than 4 weeks old. The infant mortality rate is 75 per 1,000 related births compared with nil in 1954 and 21.27 in 1953 and a rate of 24.9 in 1955 for England and Wales. Rates based on such small numbers however are liable to show considerable variation over the years.

### 4. CANCER

Six of the deaths in the town were recorded from cancer, 4 being males and 2 females.

### 5. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

1955 would appear to have been a record year as far as infectious diseases were concerned, only one case of infectious disease being reported during the whole year; a case of scarlet fever in a school child. The almost entire absence of cases of notifiable disease is gratifying but is not due to any active intervention by the Health Department unless in the case of diphtheria where the immunisation campaign undoubtedly keeps the disease in check.

#### (a) Measles

Measles is understandably low as it well recognised that the incidence of measles rises in alternate years and so the decrease or absence of the disease in 1955 was complementary to the high total in the previous year.

#### (b) Diphtheria

No case was notified during the year. The last case of diphtheria was recorded in 1948. The incidence of diphtheria in England and Wales continues to fall from 3,575 cases and 15.6 deaths in 1948 to a new low figure of 161 with 11 deaths in 1955. In order to eradicate the disease, it is considered necessary to secure the immunisation of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday. In Area No. 8, the number of children immunised before they were one year old was 41%.



(c) Poliomyelitis

No case of poliomyelitis occurred and in this the town was fortunate as in the rest of England and Wales poliomyelitis showed a particularly high incidence, the number of notifications being exceeded only in the outbreaks in 1947 and 1950. In this connection, some recently published work on the distribution of poliomyelitis antibodies in the blood of children, an indication of immunity, is of interest. In Betwys Y Coed, a village in Wales about the size of Blakeney, although no cases of poliomyelitis had been reported since 1912, it was found that infection by poliomyelitis viruses in childhood was extremely common and it is possible that such widespread infection at an early age may partly explain the low incidence of the disease in that village.

A big step towards the safe and effective control of poliomyelitis in this country was taken early this year (1956) when a voluntary scheme of vaccination with a British variant of the Salk vaccine was introduced and offered to children born between the years 1947 and 1954 inclusive.

(d) Tuberculosis

Three new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified during the year, all males. There was also 1 new case of non-pulmonary tuberculosis.

At the end of the year 16 cases remained on the register compared with 15 at the end of the previous year.

(e) Food Poisoning

No case of food poisoning was notified during the year. In this town food poisoning so far has not been a problem although in the rest of the country food poisoning has increased greatly in the post war period due, it is thought, to the marked extension of communal feeding. No doubt outside the holiday season, and apart from school meals, there is only a limited demand for communal meals and so the risk of food infection is minimised. Possibly too, quite a number of food upsets do not come to the notice of the doctor. Food premises however require to be brought up to a certain standard and in this connection the new Food Regulations which came into force on 1st January, 1956, are to be welcomed.

6. LEGISLATION

Puerperal Pyrexia (Amendment) Regulations 1954.

A new form of notification for cases of puerperal pyrexia requiring the cause of the disease, if known, to be stated, came into operation on the 1st March, 1955.

The Transfer of Functions (Food and Drugs) Order, 1955.

With effect from the 6th July, 1955, responsibility for certain functions relating to food hygiene were transferred from the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to the Minister of Health.

Food and Drugs Act 1955.

By the Food and Drugs Amendment Act 1954 (appointed Day) Order 1955, the 1st January, 1956, was the day appointed on which the Food and Drugs Act 1955 came into force. New Food Hygiene Regulations 1955 also came into force on the same day.

## 7. VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION IN AREA No. 8

### (a) Vaccination

167 children under the age of 1 year were vaccinated during 1955 in Area 8 which comprises the Rural Districts of Docking and Walsingham and the Urban Districts of Hunstanton and Wells-next-the-Sea. There were 851 births during the year in the Area so that only the equivalent of 18.4% of the children born were vaccinated, a figure well below that for the County as a whole. This figure is without doubt an under estimate as births among American service families are included in the total number of births, but figures of the number of American babies vaccinated are not available. 217 reports of primary vaccination and 50 of re-vaccination were received during the year. The following table gives details of the age groups:-

<u>Age at which vaccinated.</u>	<u>Vaccinations</u>	<u>Re-vaccinations</u>
Under 1 year	167	-
1 year	10	2
2 to 4 years	8	3
5 to 14 years	6	5
15 years and over	26	40
Total	217	50

### (b) Diphtheria Immunisation

Diphtheria immunisation is best carried out during the last quarter of the child's first year of life and booster doses are required to be given at the ages of 5 and 9 years. Immunisation is carried out at infant welfare centres and at surgeries and re-immunisations at school medical inspections.

The following table shows the number of children who were immunised during the year in Area 8:-

#### Primary Immunisation

<u>Under 1 year</u>	<u>1 to 4 years</u>	<u>5 to 14 years</u>	<u>Total</u>
349	178	82	609

#### Booster Doses

<u>5 to 14 years</u>	<u>Total</u>
799	799

The number of children in Area 8 at 31st December, 1955, who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date is as follows:-

<u>Age at 31.12.55</u> <u>i.e. born in year</u>	<u>under 1</u> <u>1955</u>	<u>1 - 4</u> <u>1954-51</u>	<u>5 - 9</u>	<u>10 - 14</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>under 15</u>
Last complete course of injections - whether primary or booster.	53	1680	2167	1464	5364
1950 or earlier	-	-	349	930	1279
Total					6643

(c) Whooping Cough Immunisation

Immunisation with whooping cough vaccine was introduced as a County Scheme in 1953 and is becoming increasingly popular. This vaccine can be given separately or combined with diphtheria antigen - the latter is now the recommended one - whooping cough immunisation does not give so complete a degree of protection as that for diphtheria but if not prevented in all cases the severity of the attack is certainly lessened. The following table shows the number of children who were immunised against whooping cough in Area 8 in 1955:-

	<u>Under 1</u>	<u>1 year</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5 - 14</u>	<u>Total</u>
With whooping cough vaccine alone.	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
With combined whooping cough and diphtheria prophylactic.	229	87	10	3	1	-	330
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Total	229	87	10	4	3	-	333
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## PART II.

## (Medical Statistics)

TABLE 1. GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres) ... ..	2,670
Estimated Resident Population ... ..	2,590
Rateable Value ... ..	£12,863
Sum represented by a Penny Rate ... ..	£48

TABLE 2. LIVE BIRTHS

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate ... ..	21	16	37
Illegitimate ... ..	1	2	3
Total ... ..	22	18	40

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of  
Estimated Resident Population ... .. 15.38<sup>4</sup>

TABLE 3. STILL BIRTHS

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TABLE 4. DEATHS (All ages)

	Males	Females	Total
	15	11	26

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 of  
Estimated Resident Population ... .. 10.04

TABLE 5. INFANT MORTALITY (Deaths of Infants under One Year)

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate ... ..	-	3	3
Illegitimate ... ..	-	-	-

TABLE 6. DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER FOUR WEEKS OF AGE

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate ... ..	-	3	3
Illegitimate ... ..	-	-	-

TABLE 7. CAUSES OF DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR

	Males	Females	Total
Intra Cranial Haemorrhage	-	2	2
Pneumonia ... ..	-	1	1
Total ... ..	-	3	3

TABLE 8. CAUSE OF TOTAL DEATHS

	Males	Females	Total
11. Malignant neoplasms, lung bronchus.	1	-	1
12. Malignant neoplasm, breast.	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms.	3	1	4
15. Leukaemia.	1	-	1
17. Vascular lesions nervous system.	2	2	4
18. Coronary disease, angina.	-	1	1
20. Other heart disease.	1	-	1
22. Influenza.	-	1	1
23. Pneumonia.	1	2	3
24. Bronchitis.	2	-	2
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum.	2	-	2
32. Other defined and ill defined diseases.	1	2	3
34. All other accidents.	1	-	1
35. Suicide.	-	1	1
Total	15	11	26

TABLE 9. DEATHS ACCORDING TO AGES (Including outward Transfers)

	Males	Females	Total
Under 1 year	-	2	2
1 and under 5	-	-	-
5 " " 10	-	-	-
10 " " 20	-	-	-
20 " " 30	-	-	-
30 " " 40	1	-	1
40 " " 50	-	-	-
50 " " 60	1	1	2
60 " " 70	1	3	4
70 " " 80	7	4	11
80 " " 90	3	2	5
90 " " 100	1	-	1
Total	14	12	26
Total adjusted	15	11	26

TABLE 10. CANCER The following table shows the incidence of Cancer deaths during the past five years:-

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Males	3	5	3	3	4
Females	1	5	5	3	2
Total	4	5	8	6	6

TABLE 11. SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Population	2,577	2,577	2,610	2,600	2,590
Live Births	44	56	47	49	40
Still Births	1	2	1	-	-
Deaths	39	35	32	33	26
Infant Deaths	-	3	1	-	3

TABLE 12. SUMMARY OF BIRTH AND DEATH RATES

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Live Births ... ..	17.00	21.72	17.62	18.8	15.38 <sup>4</sup>
Still Births ... ..	0.38	0.77	0.38	0.00	0.00
Crude Deaths ... ..	15.11	13.58	12.26	12.69	10.04
Infant Mortality ... ..	0.00	53.57	21.27	0.00	75.00

TABLE 13. (a) INFECTIOUS DISEASES

	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10 & Over	Total
Scarlet Fever ... ..	-	-	1	-	1

TABLE 14. BIRTH RATES AND ~~NATURAL~~ MORTALITY RATE FOR 1955.  
PROVISIONAL FIGURES BASED ON QUARTERLY RETURNS.

	England and Wales	Wells-next-the-Sea Urban District
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Rates per 1,000 population.

Births

Live Births	15.00	17.1 <sup>1</sup> <del>15.38</del>
Still Births	23.10	Nil

Deaths

All causes	11.70	7.7 <sup>7</sup> <del>9.23</del>
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All Deaths  
causes under  
1 year of age.

24.90	75.00
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TABLE 15. MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Measles ... ..	1	13	2	138	-
Whooping Cough ... ..	18	-	16	12	-

TABLE 16. TUBERCULOSIS (Details of new cases during 1955)

Age Period	Respiratory M.	Respiratory F.	Non-Respiratory M.	Non-Respiratory F.
Under 1 year	-	-	-	-
1 - 4 years	-	-	-	-
5 - 14 "	-	-	-	1
15 - 24 "	1	-	-	-
25 - 34 "	2	-	-	-
35 and Over	-	-	-	-
Total	3	-	-	1

TABLE 17. TUBERCULOSIS (Number of cases on T.B. Register  
end 1955)

				Males	Females	Total
Pulmonary	...	...		9	5	14
Non-Pulmonary	...	...		1	1	2
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Total	...	...		10	6	16

TABLE 18. TUBERCULOSIS (Details of new cases for last 5 years)

			1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Pulmonary	M		2	1	2	2	3
	F		1	2	-	-	-
Non-Pulmonary	M		-	-	-	-	-
	F		-	-	-	-	1
Total . . . . .			3	3	2	2	4



PART III.

Council Offices,  
Wells-next-the-Sea,  
Norfolk.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Wells-next-the-Sea Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1955.

COMPLAINTS

During the year 48 complaints were received as follows:-

Rats or Mice in Houses or Premises	8
Insects	3
Choked Drains	8
Other nuisances	29
Total	48

All complaints were investigated and appropriate action taken.

INSPECTIONS

The number of inspections carried out in connection with Public Health works during the year was as follows:-

<u>NATURE OF INSPECTIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF VISITS</u>
Housing Survey	241
Building Byelaws and Repairs	104
Overcrowding, Drainage etc.	58
Disinfections & Disinfestations	7
Slaughterhouses	231
Shops and Bakehouses	19
Pest Act	33
Factories & Workshops	13
Miscellaneous and Nuisances	196
Total	902

WATER SUPPLY

The quantity supplied during the year was 24,698,000 Gallons and as a result of the Spring and early Summer no shortage of supply was experienced during the peak period of demand in August and early September when in one week 643,000 gallons were supplied. A falling off in the supply was noted in October but the well recovered by the end of the year.

During the year the Council instructed Mr. V. Maslin, Civil Engineer, King's Lynn, to prepare a scheme for a reinforced Concrete Water Tower with a capacity of 100,000 gallons to be constructed adjoining the pumping station. The increased storage is urgently needed to meet the seasonal demand by making full use of night pumping, as the present steel tank has only a capacity equal to three hours of the Peak demand, and there is no reserve for Fire Protection purposes.

## SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

No works of Sewerage were carried out during the year.

The Remedial Works caused by the settlement of the Sedimentation Tanks were completed during the year and as a result of the slightly increased storage of the tanks, the final effluent has been improved and is now of quite good standard.

During the Winter and early Spring considerable difficulty has been met in drying the sludge on the beds, this is no doubt due to the increased use of wetting agencies by the public due to the hardness of the water supply and also the frequency with which the site is subjected to land and sea mists.

Consideration is being given to this problem by the Public Health Committee and both the necessity of increasing the drying area and the provision of Sludge Digestion plant are under consideration.

Owing to a lack of demand for the dried sludge for manural purposes, all sludge is being removed to the Refuse Dump at Warham Road.

## PESTS ACT

During the year poisoning was carried out in various parts of the town and an area at Warham Road including the Refuse Dump was treated in a combined scheme in conjunction with the Pests Officers of British Railways and the Norfolk County Council.

## SCAVENGING

Refuse Collection is carried out by means of a low loading vehicle with a crew of three men. A weekly collection is carried out.

Night Soil is collected early on three mornings each week by the scavengers, a 300 gallon removable tank being placed in the vehicle for this purpose. Arrangements were in hand at the end of the year for reducing the work to two mornings each week.

## BEACH

Owing to growth of popularity of the Beach and the dry season there was at the height of the season serious overcrowding of the Sanitary facilities in the Caravan and Camping Grounds. Arrangements are proposed by the Council to double the accommodation provided by the construction of new conveniences.

Additional sanitary accommodation was provided at the rear of the sandhills at the west end of the Beach and temporary sanitary accommodation removed.

## STATUTORY AND OTHER NOTICES

During the year the Church Street No. 13 Clearance Order was confirmed and arrangements completed for the re-housing of the tenants in the Bungalows nearing completion on the Northfield Estate.

One Closing Order and one Demolition Order were made by the Council during the year.

Two houses in the No. 5 Clearance Area were demolished and the remaining house vacated ready for demolition.

Two individual unfit houses were demolished during the year, No. 31 Blackhorse Yard and House, East End.

## SLAUGHTERHOUSES

There are three licensed Slaughterhouses in the district and I submit you details of Inspections etc. carried out during the year

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
Inspected	115	5	3	184	425	732
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	3	-	1	4	8	16
% of number affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis	0.06		33	2.2	1.4	2.3

The following are details of carcases or parts condemned:-

Cattle

Parts 45 lbs.

Sheep

Carcases 1 120 lbs.  
Parts 52 lbs. 172 "

Pigs

Carcases 2 344 lbs.  
Parts 91 lbs. 435 "

Calves

Carcases 1 45 "

Total weight of meat condemned 697 lbs.

In addition to the above 1 tin of corned beef weight 6 lbs. was condemned at foodshops.

PORT SANITARY

During the year 16 vessels with a total Registered tonnage of 2,561 tons entered the port for cargo and 16 vessels with a total Registered tonnage of 2,473 left with cargo. All the vessels were motor vessels.

All vessels inspected were in clean and satisfactory condition.

The ports or places with which Wells had trade were:-

Hamburg	-	Barley
Delfz	-	Straw
Antwerp	-	Barley
Hull	-	Wheat
Ipswich	-	Wheat
Leith	-	Barley

Yours obediently,

F. RODWELL

Sanitary Officer.



APPENDIX "A"

LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD

Clarence House,  
6, Clarence Road,  
NORWICH.

Analytical and Consulting  
Chemists

1st February, 1956.

Certificate No. 930.G  
Lab. No. 2920/W

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS OF WATER

Sample received from F. Rodwell, Esq., Wells-next-Sea.

Marked Public Supply, Waterworks Well.

Date received 16th January, 1956.

Appearance when received Clear.

Nature of Deposit Nil

Colour Nil Odour Nil

Reaction Alkaline pH 7.8 Taste Satisfactory.

Results of Chemical Analysis in parts per million

Ammoniacal nitrogen .....	0.04	Hardness as $\text{CaCO}_3$	
Albuminoid nitrogen .....	0.06	Total .....	306
Nitrate nitrogen .....	11.00	Carbonate (temporary) ....	240
Nitrite nitrogen .....	Nil	Non-carbonate (permanent) ..	66
Chlorine as chlorides ...	86.00	Alkalinity as $\text{CaCO}_3$ .....	240
Oxygen absorbed .....	0.15	Free carbon dioxide .....	13
(4 hr., $27^\circ\text{C}.$ )		Total solids (at $180^\circ\text{C}.$ ) ...	544
		Iron (total) .....	Nil
		Metals in solution .....	Nil

Bacteriological Results

Number of colonies developing per ml. in 48 hours at  $37^\circ\text{C}$  ..... 1

Presumptive coliform organisms - Probable Number per 100 ml. Nil

B. Coli Type 1 (faecal) ..... Absent

OPINION

This water is of good organic quality and the chemical analysis shows no sign of pollution. The bacteriological condition of the water is highly satisfactory. The reaction of this water is on the alkaline side of neutrality and it would not be expected to have any serious corrosive action on metals. The total hardness is lower than the average for East Anglian waters, approximately to  $21^\circ$  Clark, and about  $17^\circ$  of this is temporary. Metallic contamination is absent and the clarity, odour and taste of the sample were all satisfactory. In our opinion, this water is fit for drinking and all purposes of a Public Supply.

(Signed) Lincoln Sutton and Wood.





